



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

a coming of God to judgment; or, if one prefer the other form of statement, a bringing of both the just and the unjust before the tribunal of the Most High. What further results are effected in individuals in the world of spirits, to what conditions the souls of those who are cut off from earthly life by the judgments of God are consigned, and what may be the possible changes of life and modes of thought and action in the unseen world,—these and all related questions are left in mystery. Only the great truths that the wicked shall surely be punished and the righteous be gloriously rewarded are clearly made known to us by the revelations of God.

CHEYNE'S COMMENTARY ON THE PSALMS.*

BY PROF. EDWARD L. CURTIS, PH. D.,

McCormick Theol. Seminary, Chicago, Ill.

A volume by Dr. Cheyne is always welcome. By one familiar with his writing, its leading characteristics can be stated almost before its pages are opened. Its English will be choice, adorned with neat and happy phrases. A delightful literary aroma will pervade the whole, showing that the author is no dry-as-dust student, but one who holds fellowship and communion not only with commentators and theologians, but also with poets and philosophers, the greatest and the best minds. Exact and painstaking scholarship will be exhibited. Originality also and freshness of view, with, however, no disregard of the opinions of others. The most recent productions of biblical scholars of England, America, Germany, and France, as well as the old standards, will be made, by citation and reference, to illuminate the sacred text. And above all there will be a spirit of candor, fairness, and better still of devout spirituality and reverence, seen on every page. All of these characteristics we expected to find in this latest work of Dr. Cheyne, and we have not been disappointed. It is worthy to be placed alongside of his commentary on Isaiah. As in that, the student will find here also one of the best endeavors to compare Hebrew religious thought and feeling, as illustrated in the text, with that of other people. This indeed is a striking feature of Dr. Cheyne's work. While there has been no end of writers who have illustrated the sacred text by oriental customs and manners, he proceeds a step further and endeavors to show constant parallels between biblical expression and thought and those of other people. This doubtless will be offensive to some—those holding the fashion of endeavoring to exalt the Jewish religion by degrading the religions of all other people. But this is wrong, and defeats its purpose, as men are learning from the science of comparative religion. Revealed religion is not rendered less lustrous, less unique, less the one true religion of supernatural origin, by granting parallel elements in other religions. Nay, its lustre by such a setting is rather enhanced. This then is the most noteworthy feature of Dr. Cheyne's commentaries. Often here he will appear to carry this too far and find mythic allusions

* THE BOOK OF PSALMS, or The Praises of Israel. A new translation, with commentary. By the Rev. T. K. Cheyne, M. A., D. D. London: *Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.* New York: *Thos. Whittaker & Co.*

in the sacred songs which many will not allow ; but it must be remembered that, rightly understood, the basis of revealed religion may be called natural, that there was a development upward, with many accommodations to the notions and feelings of natural religion. The Old Testament continually exhibits this fact.

In reference to Dr. Cheyne's position on the date of the Psalms, it may be said that, while he gives no special discussion of this point on each Psalm, and perhaps rightly, for how impossible it is to fix their chronology with exactness, he places them as a whole late in Israel's history. He regards Ewald's view that there are eleven Davidic psalms the most conservative at present tenable. At this we demur. The bloom of Israel's poetic literature we still place in the age of the shepherd king. Why not ? Was not the religious air pure enough to inspire the Psalmist's praises of Israel's God before the luxury and idolatry from an outside world came in through the material development in the age of Solomon and subsequently ? Possibly the worship of the Hebrews may have been irregular. Jehovah also may have been conceived of as primarily a national God. But we cannot yet be convinced that at the start of the Hebrew monarchy inspired bards did not sing. Religious fervor then must have been intense.

Turning now to Dr. Cheyne's view of the Messianic Psalms, we find much to commend. In regard to the second, he opines that it refers not to any historical king regarded as typically Messianic, but to the ideal or Messianic King himself. Psalm 110, he says, may perhaps have the same reference. Psalm 45, on the other hand, did not have an original Messianic reference, although on such a theory it may have been preserved in the Psalter. This we regard correct. " Psalm 22 is most probably a description under the form of a dramatic monologue of the ideal Israelite, called by a kindred writer 'the covenant of the people' and 'the light the nations' (Isa. 13:7), who shall rise out of the provisional church-nation, and identifying himself with it, lead it on to spiritual victory." This explanation we also favor.

When we turn to Dr. Cheyne's translations and textual criticism, we cannot find so much to commend as in the other features of his commentary. In the first place his translations are often far from felicitous, and we think him prone to find too many corruptions of the text and to suggest too readily that words and phrases have dropped out. Our present Massoretic text, it is true, is not faultless; but great conservatism is necessary in making emendations lest the last state be worse than the first. To illustrate, we present his rendering of Psalm 23:1-4 :

1. Jehovah is my shepherd ; I want for nothing.
2. In pastures of young grass he couches me ;
to reposeful waters he gently guides me ;
my soul he doth restore.
3. He leads me along in right tracks,
because of his name ;
4. Should I even walk in a ravine of Hades gloom,
I will fear no evil.
[No unseen foe shall hurt me,]
for thou wilt be with me ;
thy club and shepherd's staff
they will comfort me.

We cannot agree that the structure of this artistic poem demands the addition made in v. 4. Hebrew poetry possesses much of its life, beauty and vigor, because it refuses to be measured off with the regularity of a Chinese garden plat.

Dr. Cheyne carries his subjective criticism too far. We are told that in Psalm 24, vs. 7-10 are a fragment of another Psalm. The reason for all this is thus stated: "The Psalm as it stands is divisible into two parts, the connection of which at any rate is not obvious. The God of vs. 1-6 is the God of the infinitely great and the infinitely small, the God who made the earth and all that is in it, and yet does not disdain to be called my God; the God of vs. 7-10 is a victorious war-God. The religion of the first part is inward and moral; the religion of the second, so far as it can be characterized at all, is not in harmony with that of the first." To all this it is sufficient to reply that the consciousness of the Christian church, in their use of this Psalm as one for so many ages, proves that its conceptions are harmonious. "The infinitely great God" and "the infinitely small God" can well be a victorious war-God, and why should not a poet of Israel have had sufficient poetic genius to compose this Psalm, so beautifully adapted with these two ideas united to be sung at the bringing of the ark from the house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem. (See Delitzsch *in loco*.)

In form this commentary resembles Perowne's. It is equally happy in arrangement, and while we should not rank it as high, if one desires a commentary which shall combine all needful elements in itself, containing both suggestions practical for homiletical purposes, and critical exegesis, we rank it higher if one desires a purely critical commentary on the Psalms; for while from its brevity it may often appear fragmentary, we believe in this respect it has no superior in English. Still a just conservatism warns one to be on guard against too radical views. Dr. Cheyne is not always a safe guide. One feels the lack also of a critical introduction to the Psalter. This matter is almost entirely wanting, being probably reserved for another volume; we hope that it may soon appear.